



## P R E S S   R E L E A S E

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **STAY SAFE, HELP OTHERS DURING COLD WEATHER**

SHASTA COUNTY – Cold weather is here, including forecasted low overnight temperatures this week.

Older adults and people experiencing homelessness are especially susceptible to the dangers of cold weather. Other groups at risk include infants, people who work or are active outside, and people who live in poorly insulated homes without heat or power.

#### **Be aware of carbon monoxide hazards**

When you build a fire indoors, be aware of carbon monoxide poisoning. Burning wood or fossil fuels (such as gasoline, coal, propane, oil or methane) creates carbon monoxide, an invisible, odorless, colorless and toxic gas. Heating and cooking equipment can also create carbon monoxide, and vehicles running in a garage can produce dangerous levels. Mild carbon monoxide poisoning can feel like the flu (nausea, headache and drowsiness), but more serious poisoning or prolonged exposure can lead to difficulty breathing and death. High concentrations of carbon monoxide can be dangerous even if a person is exposed to it for a short time. Accidental deaths occur every year in the United States because of carbon monoxide poisoning.

#### **Protect yourself:**

- Never use a gas range or oven to heat a home.
- Never use a charcoal grill, lantern or portable camping stove inside a house, garage, tent or camper.
- Don't run a vehicle or other fueled engine (including a generator) inside a closed garage or basement or outside an open window, door or vent where exhaust can vent into an enclosed area.
- Keep vents and flues free of debris, especially if winds are high. Flying debris can block ventilation lines. Have your chimney checked annually.
- If you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning, consult a health care professional right away.

**How you can help others:**

- Check on your neighbors or relatives who may be vulnerable.
- Be aware of the warning signs of hypothermia in adults and children: shivering, exhaustion, confusion, fumbling hands, memory loss, slurred speech or drowsiness. Infant symptoms include bright red, cold skin and/or very low energy. If you notice any of these signs get medical attention *immediately*.

For more information, contact the Shasta County Health and Human Services Agency at 530-225-5591, visit the [Extreme Cold Safety](#) page on shastahhsa.net. Additional winter weather safety guidance can be found on the [Extreme Weather](#) page of ShastaReady.org.

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